

Holy Week in Biblical Perspective  
*Resurrection Lord's Day*  
"He Is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed!"  
John 20:1–18  
Dr. Harry L. Reeder, III  
April 9, 2023 • Sunday Morning Sermon

This is the Word of God. It's eternal, infallible, inerrant and sufficient. John 20:1-18 says [1] *Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. [2] So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." [3] So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. [4] Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. [5] And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. [6] Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, [7] and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. [8] Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; [9] for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. [10] Then the disciples went back to their homes.*

*[11] But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. [12] And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. [13] They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." [14] Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. [15] Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." [16] Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). [17] Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" [18] Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

There is a wonderful statement that I was taught early on in the Alliance Youth Fellowship, where I grew up as a young person. Maybe you've heard it as well. The statement is "God said it, I believe it, that settles it." After I'd become a Christian for a while, I realized what that is attempting to say and I'm not quarreling with it, but I think actually, more accurately, once you understand the doctrine of the Word of God, you realize God said it, and that settles it, whether you believe it or not. I believe it is our desire that you believe God's Word. God said it, that settles it and I believe it. What is interesting is that God didn't settle down there. I have chosen these words carefully. God has taken the time intentionally, thoughtfully, carefully, continually and necessarily verifies everything that He has said. He not only says it, and that settles it, by virtue of who He is when He says it, it of necessity, verifies it, continually verifies it, intentionally verifies it.

God is obviously supernatural, therefore, what He says is never unnatural, but it is supernatural and whenever God says something, it is supernatural. God's Word is never irrational, but it is supernatural. It's too much for us. Who can know the mind of the Lord (Romans 11:34)? We can know Him immediately, intimately and accurately but we cannot know Him exhaustively. His Word is supernatural, but never irrational. His Word is supra logical, but never illogical. Therefore, whenever God does what He does, says what He says of necessity, it's verified by virtue of the fact that He has said it and done it. The evidences of what He does are always before us.

So, God records for us in His Word, the resurrection of Christ but He has also verified it. It stands with evidences. It stands undeniable. There have been some jurists, such as Simon Greenleaf, not necessarily a friend to the Gospel, who, after doing his legal analysis, says abundantly clear, there is nothing more evidentially affirmed than the resurrection of Christ.

When I became a Christian early on, and I tend to be a rather intense individual whenever I latch on to something and when Jesus latched on to me and I responsibly, responsibly latched on to him, I got pretty intentionally. I'll never forget when I went back to East Carolina University, having put my wife, Cindy through school, I remember my economics teacher. I had to take one economics course, so it was economics 101. My economics teacher was actually Mr. Florida. He had won the bodybuilding championship. He was brilliant for he had two PhD's and I would share the Gospel with him and he would fire back at me. It was during that time that it seemed like Satan put me in the crosshairs because I once something is in front of me, I tend to do the deep dive into it.

As I was doing the deep dive into Christianity in those days it seemed like out of everywhere, including this professor and some others at East Carolina, would be bringing me books, questioning the validity and the integrity of the resurrection accounts of Christ. One guy gave me a book that went to pains to say it was all a hoax. It was mass hallucination. Another one, was just wish fulfillment and a fabricated mythological account of the resurrection of Christ out of wish fulfillment of the disciples who so desperately missed Him and were desperately disappointed that their hopes had been dashed by His death. Then, in the early 1970s, there was the Passover plot and then various other conspiracies.

I would read all of these and then go investigate the Scriptures as I would work my way through them. I had some wonderful Godly people that I could call on and I saw through it pretty quickly, but what amazed me was the lengths people would go to explain away something that stood with multiple, premiere, paramount evidences and verifications of the resurrection of Christ. Then I kind of came under the influence of others that say, 'you don't need to talk about the evidences of the resurrection when you're talking to people, just preach the Bible. The Bible says He's raised, so preach the Bible and let people deal with it. If they have problems, don't take the time to walk through the evidences, keep preaching the Bible.'

That kind of draws me because I believe in the power of the Word – keep preaching the Word for God will use it in proclaiming it. My only problem is with doing that is number one, Jesus took time to verify it. Jesus happened to make two trips back to the upper room. On the first day of His resurrection, He went to the upper room but not everyone was there. So He made another trip back because, here is verification, Thomas had said, "Unless I see Him, I won't believe it." Jesus came back and told Thomas to touch Him. Jesus went back and verified it.

I don't think I'm more spiritual than Jesus and if He took the time to verify it why can't I take the time to verify or at least present the evidences. I know I cannot persuade you to

become a Christian with the evidences and I'll tell you why in just a few moments at the end of this, but I do know God can persuade you through the persuasions of the verities of the resurrection. So I'm glad to go through that. In fact, not only did Jesus go back to verify to Thomas, but Paul received a letter from the church at Corinth and they were questioning the resurrection of believers at the end of the age and the resurrection of Christ. This is found in I Corinthians 15. Here, Paul takes time to talk to them about the evidences and uses Scripture when he points out that Peter saw Him, James saw Him, and 500 people saw Him.

Then Paul goes into a persuasive argument. It's a twofold argument. It's called *reductio ad absurdum* and *ad hominem*. *Ad hominem* is when you take a person's position to show them how foolish it is and *reductio ad absurdum* is when you just show how foolish the argument is. Paul uses both. Paul says to them 'if Jesus isn't raised, then we are, of all people, most to be pitied. Our faith is vain, futile and everything is empty if Jesus isn't raised. Everything is vanity. How absurd it is for you as a believer to entertain any notion that Jesus was not raised. It's at the core I deliver to you what is a first importance that Jesus was delivered up according to the Scriptures, and that on the third day He was raised, according to the Scriptures and the death of Jesus was according to the Scriptures. The resurrection of Jesus was according to the Scriptures and they are first things of importance (I Corinthians 15)."

Christ's death and resurrection are not peripheral doctrines of Christianity that we can dismiss. They are essential to the Gospel message, which is essential to our salvation. In fact, I Corinthians 15 is so powerful I want us to turn there. Look at what Paul says when he is informed of this question about the resurrection of Jesus. I Corinthians 15:1-10 says *[1] Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain.*

*[3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that He appeared to Cephas (Apostle Peter), then to the twelve. [6] Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me. [9] For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. [10] But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. [11] Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*

Paul says here the Gospel is a primary importance. It's a first importance. I know everything in the Bible is important. I know that because the Bible says II Timothy 3:16-17, *[16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* So everything is important, but not everything in the Bible is of equal importance. For instance, the Bible speaks about church government. In my study of the Bible, I ended up being Presbyterian due to their church government seems to be the Biblical form of government as far as I can see. Now, if I had ended up a Congregationalist or in the bishopric system of government, that doesn't mean I can't be saved. (16:41)

Let me put it this way You don't have to be a Presbyterian to be saved. I wouldn't take a chance if I were you all, but you don't have to be. That's a secondary doctrine, meaning it's important and needed, but it is not essential to understand and believe in order to be saved. But if you get the Gospel wrong, you get everything wrong. You can't be saved without the Gospel. You can't understand worship without the Gospel. You can't understand the Christian life without the Gospel. You can't understand the doctrine of the church without the Gospel. It's the foundation, the formation, and the motivation of the entire Christian life. It's of primary importance, first importance, and what two elements of the gospel does Paul single out as of first importance? It is that Christ died for our sins and that He was raised from the grave. Those are two essentials.

If He did not rise from the grave, then we're still in our sins because the resurrection affirms the satisfaction of His atoning death. The Bible says in Romans 4:24-25 says [24] *It will be counted to us who believe in Him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, [25] who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.* Why did Jesus go to the cross? It's not a martyr's death. It's not a model's death. It's not a revolutionary death. It's an atoning death. The LAMB of God is taking our place and all of our sin is being placed upon Him, and therefore He is making atonement. It's one thing to go to the cross and say you're making that atonement.

What did God promise to do if the Atonement was accepted as a full payment for our sins of cosmic treason against the Almighty? It's that the One who made the Atonement would see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. If Jesus is still in that grave, He cannot see the travail of His soul and its satisfaction. Thus, the Scripture says on the third day He would be raised. He was delivered up because of our transgressions. He was raised because of our justification. It's not our justification that raises Him, His resurrection is a declaration that we're justified. His resurrection doesn't justify us. His death justifies us. His resurrection is God's announcement that the atoning death of Christ had satisfied the justice of God and the wrath of God against our sins had been taken by our Savior who drank that cup to the bottom. When He said "It is finished." It was done and we know it was done because His body did not stay in the grave. He was raised.

I hear this mistake every Easter by preachers. He didn't raise Himself. The Father who crushed Him under judgment, in our place, raised Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. He was raised to tell us that we are redeemed and all of that stands in space, time and history with evidences and verifications. I have nine verifications that I will give to you quickly.

Before I give those nine to you, when I was in seminary, there was a man who ran for president. His name was Ronald Reagan. He had an amazing ability to get along with his adversaries. He got along with Democrats and probably the most famous was his relationship with the leader of the Democratic Party named Tip O'Neill. They had an amazing relationship, but they were clearly political foes. Then on the world stage, his adversary was a man by the name of Mikhail Gorbachev, but he had an amazing relationship with him. You ought to read about it sometime if you never have. It's really extraordinary. As they were working through that nuclear arms reduction treaty, it was said by Gorbachev that "we'll just trust each others, that it?" and Reagan looked at him and said, 'Oh, we will trust and we will verify and the more you verify, the more we're going to trust and if you are trustworthy, you don't mind being verified.'

God has no problem verifying His trustworthiness because by His very nature, whenever He speaks and acts, it always ends up with evidential verification. When God creates

a creation comes into existence. When God acts in Providence, things work together for good. When God redeems through an atoning death and the resurrection of His Son, there are verifications of necessity and they are intentionally there. While they do not have the power to make you come to Jesus, they do stand and hold us accountable that we must come to Jesus. And it's true, as the centurion said at the cross, 'this is the son of God' (Matthew 27:54). So here is some of that verification.

The first verification are the Scriptures. Paul said in I Corinthians 15 that according to the Scriptures, He was delivered up at the cross and then He was raised from the tomb. Psalm 16 says the Messiah would die, His body would be put in the grave, His soul would go to Sheol, that compartment of Sheol for believers called Paradise, where He said to the thief hanging on the cross next to Him that, 'This day, I'll see you in paradise' (Luke 23:43). And on the third day, that soul of Jesus comes from paradise, that body is raised and there is the glorified Christ on the third day, according to the Scriptures. He sees the travail of His soul and He is satisfied. The Old Testament prophesies the atoning death of a Messiah where all of our transgressions would be laid upon Him and He would pay for our sins. The Old Testament points prophetically to Christ. The narratives point to Christ – the symbols, the prophecies, the types. Everything is pointing to this Christ who would make intercession and atonement for our sins, and that He would be raised on the third day. Then the Gospels affirm the atoning death and resurrection of Christ, and then the Epistles explain the implications of the atonement of Christ.

Because Christ has died for my sins, I get to preach a sermon now following this from Romans 8:1 which says *[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* Why? The atoning death of Christ took away our condemnation. Romans 8:33-34 says *[33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* The Scriptures prophesied it, affirmed it, and explained it. The first verification is this Word of God by the Spirit of God through 40 plus human authors, through 1600 years, has, as its principal point of declaration, the preeminence of Christ, our Creator, our Redeemer and our Sustainer and it stands as a witness before us according to the Scriptures.

The second verification is a myriad of witness – multidimensional, multifaceted and multi demographic of witnesses. There are all kinds of witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. There were Jews and Gentiles that witnessed His resurrection in the Scriptures and there are somewhere between 10 to 15 documented appearances. Now, that doesn't mean anything is questionable. That's just really how it is counted. I counted 14 appearances of Christ after His resurrection prior to His ascension. His 15th appearance is after His ascension, when He appears to Paul on the road to Damascus and then in the wilderness to instruct him. In all those witnesses there are Jew, Gentile, men, women, rich and poor. There are all kinds of geographical locations. Some of them are in Jerusalem, some on the road to Emmaus, some of them are up in the Galilee. There are witnesses everywhere and there are literally hundreds of them. There are individuals such as Peter, Mary Magdalene, the women who came that day and groups such as the 12. Paul says in I Corinthians there were 500 up in Galilee with most of them being still alive and Paul would have written this letter about 20 years later. There are verifiable witnesses here.

Here's what's amazing. Unabashed, with no apology in the Bible, who are the premier witnesses to the resurrected Christ? The women. I'm going back to the first century. This is not my opinion. In the first century women were not able to testify in court because you were

deemed untrustworthy and that was Rome. Yet unabashedly the Bible tells us about the men, the women, the old, the young, the rich, the poor, the Jew and the Gentile. Jesus appeared and this isn't a concocted story because if it's concocted, why would there be women listed in the Bible when they weren't even accepted as a witness in court? They are not only there but they're premiere. They were the last ones at the cross. They were the only ones to follow Joseph and Nicodemus when they took Him to the new tomb and they were the very first ones at the tomb.

Ladies, before you get overly haughty, because you're probably feeling a little haughty right now, so let me humble you just a tad gently. I praise the Lord they were the premiere witnesses, but they still didn't get it right. They should have been coming to meet a risen Savior because He'd already told them on the third day He was going to rise. They're on their way to the tomb because they think they have to finish the preparation of His body. They think He's still in the tomb. He's not in the tomb and when they get there and He's not there, their first thought is that somebody stole the body. It never occurred to them He was risen. Mary Magdalene obviously is absolutely convinced someone had taken Him. Don't you just love the honesty of the Bible? We don't whitewash anything. I mean, we get to see real history, warts, pimples and everything showing up.

Verification number three, are the disciples. The disciples verify it. Those who have embraced the pathology of cowardice now become imperfect but intentional leaders in the church, authors of Scripture and witnesses to the resurrected Christ. Jesus said to them, "When they take Me away, in fear you will flee." That's what the Bible tells us in Mark 14. Some went to Bethany, some went to the upper room, locked the door, some we don't know where they were hiding. They're hiding all over the place. The only one that came anywhere near had to be called a little bit closer. That was the youngest of them, John, as he was given charge of Mary by Jesus while He's on the cross. The rest of them have embraced the pathology of cowardice. Peter had actually denied Jesus three times. Now they become witnesses, bold and courageous and eventually, if the extra Biblical historians are right, all of them ended up dying a martyrs' death, for all of them died under persecution for this risen Christ and so they verify it.

The fourth verification is the Gospel. What is at the core of the Gospel? It is the atoning death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ which is of first importance. That's why whenever we stop in worship and use our ancient creeds, you'll find this in the creed; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, buried, descended into hell, on the third day He rose again. I believe. The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the various creeds of the church all have embraced it, and therefore the creeds of the church and the Gospel message itself from the Bible affirms the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Verification number five is His family – the conversion of the family He had. There are three times His family is referenced in the Gospels, and you will see that all three times they are mocking Jesus. In fact, one Gospel writer simply says they did not believe in Him (John 7:5). The mocking siblings of Jesus are now seen in Acts 1 and here is what we find out after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Acts 1:12-14 says [12] *Then they (the 120) returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet (after the ascension), which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. [13] And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. [14] All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.* Now Jesus' brothers are converted.

His brothers are an affirmation, a verification that the mocking, unbelieving brothers after the resurrection become believers.

Here is a sixth verification in Acts 2. Here Peter preaches a sermon. He said 'This Jesus whom you crucified, God raised Him from the dead.' Did you know right then they could have stopped Christianity dead in its tracks? All they had to do is just roll the body out. In the very first sermon after His ascension is the unabashed, confident affirmation Jesus has been raised with no fear of contradiction because they knew the historicity and verification of the resurrected Christ.

Here is a seventh verification. For thousands of years, the creation Sabbath has been observed on the seventh day, the ceremonial mosaics Sabbaths have been observed on the seventh day and now in the New Testament, we are told Jesus is our Sabbath and He has fulfilled that. Now the Christian Sabbath becomes the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection, the Lord's Day. Every Lord's Day when you prioritize gathered worship with God's people, you are affirming, verify the resurrected Christ until He comes again. The Lord's Day for 2000 years is a declaration. He is risen. It's okay for us to have a festival season around the week of passion but every Lord's Day is Easter for us because He has risen.

The eighth verification is the sacraments. The theology of the sacraments brings you to the death and resurrection of Jesus – baptism, buried with Him, dying to sin, raised with Him unto new life in Christ. That's not modily focused, that's theologically focused. When Jesus died and was buried, I died to my sins with Him and when He was raised to the newness of life, we are raised with Him and it's seen by our regeneration. When we were dead in our sins, we've now been made alive in Christ and it will be seen at His second coming in our physical resurrection with a new body for the new Heavens and the new Earth.

Not only baptism, but also the Lord's Supper – the cup is His blood and the bread is His body where he bore our sins and we are to celebrate the Lord's Supper until He comes again. How can He come again if He's still in the grave? The Lord's Supper affirms the resurrected Christ. We celebrate His atoning death in the anticipation of the resurrected Christ's return for His people.

The ninth verification is the church, Christ's Church. I love our founding pastor. I'm grateful for our founding elders. When they finally ended up here at this location and they built a sanctuary, their desire was it be a place of God's church. It is not the church. It's the meeting place. The church is the gathered people of God. While I'm grateful for all technology that helps in matters of providential hindrance, that helps people whenever they're shut in for various reasons or whatever, Christ's Church isn't it streaming, Christ's Church assembles. They do not forsake the assembling of themselves together, and they come together on the Lord's Day to say 'He is risen' as we plant the flag in an unbelieving world that we believe in the atoning death, verified death and resurrection of Christ, our Lord and our Savior. He is ours and we are His. Because of this Savior, this church, after the resurrection, starts coming from every tribe and nation.

When Jesus went to that cross, He defeated Satan. He bound the strong man so that Satan can no longer deceive the nations and now God's covenant people are coming not from one covenanted nation, Israel, but are coming as was promised to Abraham, from every tribe and nation. Jesus is risen, declaring that the strong man has been bound, now go plunder his house (Matthew 12:29, Mark 3:27). His house was the nations, but now His house has become the place where we are drawing the treasury of Christ – His people from every tribe and nation.

Here's the take away and then we'll close in prayer. Our problem with the atoning death and the triumphant resurrection of Christ is not with the Biblical record. The Bible is clear. Jesus died for our sins and He rose again. Nor is our problem with verifiable evidences, for it stand abundantly clear. I am not the brightest bulb in the chandelier, but I've never lost these debates and the reason why is verifiable, because whenever God acts in creation, redemption and providence, the tracks are always present in space, time, and history. So, it is with the work of our Redeemer. The Gospel record of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ stands not only recorded in Holy writ, it stands verified in the Book of history, which is the record of God's acts in this world.

Our problem with the atoning death and the triumphant resurrection of Christ is not the Biblical record or the verifiable evidences, for our problem, is our heart. If you this reading today without coming to Christ, it is because you don't think you need Him. I'm pleading with you; Jesus would not have died on that cross if you did not need a Savior. He wouldn't have died on that cross if you could save yourself. He wouldn't have died on that cross if your religion could save you. He died on that cross because you need a Savior and He did for you what you couldn't do for yourself. He didn't need you. He just wanted you. I'm praying that God works in your heart and my heart that we would want Him.

The resurrection of Christ, God's Word says it. I believe it and God has already settled it. In the opening reading of John 20, when Mary walked up where was the stone? The stone was not rolled up a trough. Where was the stone? In fact, in one Gospel account, angels are sitting on top of it. Why is the stone thrown away? It wasn't to let Jesus out. When you look in the tomb, He just came right up out of those linen cloths that were still laying there. It He can come up through the cloths, He can come out that tomb. A little later on, He will walk right through the locked door of the upper room. That stone has not been blown away or thrown away to let Jesus out, for it's to let you in and verify it's empty – come look and see. Why do you seek the living among the dead? He's not here. He's living and the only reason you won't come to Him is because it's an offense to our hearts that the Bible says I need him and I need to repent and confess my sins.

Why did the early church celebrate the Lord's Day? It was because of the resurrection. Why did the disciples cowering in pathologies of cowardice, become courageous, bold leaders and martyrs? It was because of the resurrection. Why did mocking siblings become writers of Holy writ, leaders in the church and martyrs for the faith? It was because of the resurrection. Why does the church unabashedly affirm the premiere witnesses of women and Gentiles? It is because of the resurrection. Why do the sacraments focus us upon the death and resurrection of Christ? Why is the church unstoppable even though she is assaulted for 2000 years externally and she is ripped asunder internally? It is because the resurrected Christ is fulfilling His promise – I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. He has risen. That's why. Why did Jesus make a second trip to the upper room? It is because He'll lose not one of His, the resurrected Christ. He will say to Thomas, “You want proof, come see, I invite you to Myself.”

If you don't know Him, come and see, for I invite you to Jesus. For those who know Him, come see, I invite you to go and tell others about Jesus. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for the time in Your Word. Thank You for the time of worship and praise to you, our Savior, Lord and King. We give You praise and thanksgiving for there's none like



You. We love You, but we love You because You first loved us. God, I thank You that there is an atoning death that is sufficient to pay for all the sins of all of Your people for all of eternity and we are forgiven. We are declared innocent, we are adopted, we are in Christ and Christ is in us. I thank You that He is risen, declaring the assurance of salvation, and He is coming again for the saved. God, I ask You and plead with You that not one person reading this will leave without coming to Jesus. If you want to talk or pray with someone, please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for there will be those who would love to pray with you. This would be the most important decision you ever make in your life. God, for us as Your people, may every day we declare to the world He is risen – our Savior is risen indeed and that every Lord's Day is a symbol and praise God the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the preeminence of the risen Savior, Amen.